

NEW signing Derek Harris came on as substitute for Wycombe Wanderers on Saturday and scored with only his second touch of the ball to give the Blues an emphatic 3-0 victory over Isthmian League Premier Division newcomers Boreham Wood.

Harris' flying start capped a useful performance from Wanderers, their second three goal victory on the trot. Wycombe have now won their last four matches and this latest triumph pushes them into third place in the table.

Few would have put money on Wanderers making the top three after their first few matches of the season. But their improvement since the Tooting defeat has been remarkable and they are fast re-establishing themselves as championship contenders.

After that shaky opening, the Blues have gone from strength to strength and manager John Reardon deserves praise for halting the slide. He has signed three new players and each has done his job well. It is early days yet with Harris, who hit over 20 goals for Southall last season. But the way Derek took his chance for Wycombe's third goal of

Saturday augurs well for the future.

It would be unwise, however, to become over-optimistic at this stage for Wanderers have yet to come up against a side as good as Tooting. Their last two victories have been against poor sides, who should have left Loakes Park with heavier defeats. When Wanderers overcome the likes of Enfield and Dagenham they can start talking about title hopes.

Boreham Wood were only fractionally better than Kingstonian the previous Tuesday and will continue to struggle unless they strengthen their team especially up front where they were easily contained by the

home back four who are in tremendous form lately.

Full backs Paul Birdseye and Bob Davies look too good to move from their current positions while Alan Phillips and Keith Mead are enjoying a great season.

The same could not be said of the midfield men who worked in fits and starts on Saturday. At times they prised open Boreham Wood's defence with some cultured football but at others they gave the ball away through over-elaboration. It was a similar story up front.

Nevertheless, on chances Wycombe should have had six or seven goals but contented themselves with the three. The first

came after 21 minutes when Farouk Ouraishi sent in a left foot drive which struck a defender and wrongfooted goalkeeper Peter Smith. The former England amateur international recovered well but could only push the ball sideways and Dylan Evans was on it in a flash to open the account. It was Dylan's sixth goal this season.

Fed by a stream of precise passes from both full backs, Wycombe continued to make the running without looking their best. Goal number two came in the 38th minute. Again Ouraishi was involved, crossing over to Mick Holifield who beat Jim Howard in a race to the ball. Mick's shot was half stopped but had sufficient power to roll over the line despite Dave Lawrence's desperate attempt to get back.

Wood, who had failed to test Peter Spittle earlier, had two chances to get back into the game when first Danny Peters drove wide and then Mick Jackson lofted the ball over the top from six yards. It was a costly miss.

Had Wanderers accepted half the chances they carved out in the second half they would have been approaching double figures but they lacked the killer finish. Holifield gave a classic example of this in the 58th minute when Peters' clearance struck one of his own players. The rebound put Holifield clean through but Smith forced him out wide and gave the defence precious seconds to recover. The keeper eventually saved Holifield's attempted lob.

CAUGHT SQUARE

With the visitors' back four often caught square, more goals looked on the cards at any moment but we had to wait until the 73rd minute and the introduction of Harris for the third and final score. Two minutes after replacing Tony Horseman, Harris began an attack by flicking the ball on to Holifield. He returned it square to Harris who took a couple of steps and then unleashed a cracking drive into the roof of the net from 15 yards.

In the last quarter Wanderers relaxed their grip and allowed Boreham Wood a greater share of the ball. Harris followed his goal with a useful performance and fitted in nicely with the other front runners.

Wycombe might have made it 4-0 in the 87th minute when they were awarded a rather dubious penalty. Harris was brought down by Tony Martin and referee Russell, who had a good match on his first visit to Loakes Park, awarded a penalty on the advice of his linesman. From the press box it looked as though Harris had been felled outside the area but the linesman had the best view and stuck to his guns despite the protests.

Graham Mackenzie, yet to score this season, was assigned with the job of taking the spot kick but his effort lacked sufficient power and Smith was able to dive down the hill and push the ball away for a corner. Perhaps justice was done after all!

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies; G. Mackenzie, R. Day, F. Ouraishi; A. Horseman (sub D. Harris 70 mins), D. Evans, M. Holifield.

BOREHAM WOOD: P. Smith; J. Howard, P. Carrasco, A. Martin, D. Lawrence, D. Peters, M. Bevons, G. Jones; L. Varney, M. Jackson, E. Sedgewick, Sub R. Faulton (not used).

Referee: C. Russell (Harrow).
Half-time: 2-0. **Goalscorers:** Evans (21), Holifield (38), Harris (73).
Attendance: 1,250.

SELECTION PROBLEM

FULL of confidence after four consecutive victories in the Isthmian League Premier Division, Wycombe Wanderers travel to Kingstonian tonight (Tuesday) aiming for their second double of the season.

Last Tuesday, Wanderers thrashed Kingstonian 3-0 at Loakes Park and had their finishing been up to standard they could easily have doubled their score. Whether the Blues will find things as easy tonight is doubtful.

Kingstonian, who have slumped dramatically after a useful start to the season,

only went down 3-2 to Sutton on Saturday. They scored first but Sutton equalised and went ahead before half-time. K's hit back to make it 2-2 but a Ricky Kidd goal in the 86th minute clinched the points for United.

The Surrey club still have three players on the injury list and are likely to make three changes from the side that lost at Loakes Park. Mick Sorenson has moved back into defence for Withers while Barry Webb has replaced Vincent in midfield. Striker Peter Caines, who scored one of the goals

on Saturday, has returned to the front line.

Wanderers manager John Reardon has another selection problem after the performance of Derek Harris against Boreham Wood on Saturday. Derek, who came from Southall last week, scored with his second touch of the ball and did more than enough to warrant a place in the side.

But who does manager Reardon leave out? Tony Horseman has been playing well recently and his omission could upset the balance of the front three. The manager may decide to drop one of the midfield players and allow Mick Holifield to return to the left side in the

middle, but this would mean leaving out Farouk Ouraishi.

Although Harris is not fully fit — it was his first competitive football on Saturday — and he has only just recovered from a bout of 'flu', his form against Boreham Wood looked sharp enough.

Mr Reardon has no such selection problems at the back as Steve Vass is still receiving treatment for damaged ligaments. There is a slight doubt about Keith Mead who has been playing with a niggling ankle injury for the last two weeks.

Peter Spittle, the Blues goalkeeper, has asked to come off the transfer list after regaining his place for the past two games.

SATURDAY'S FIXTURES

(K.O. 3 pm)

Isthmian League Premier Division: Hitchin Town v Wycombe Wanderers.

FA Vase Preliminary Round Replay: Thame United v Flackwell Heath.

Kingsmead Athenian League: Chalfont St Peter v Ruislip Manor, Burnham v Leyton-Wingate, Marlow v Haringey.

London Spartan League Senior Division: Amersham v East Thurrock.